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CCA 86-3201

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Congressional Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20505

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22 September 1986

**TO:** Mr. Merrill Kelly  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Enclosed is information on specific Soviet involvement with Syria and Libya requested by Senator Hecht during the intelligence briefing on 15 September given by [redacted]. As you will recall, the Senator asked for the number of Soviets and the estimated amount of Soviet support to the two countries.

The Agency will make an effort to keep the Senator apprised of significant Mideast developments, as he has requested.

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## Soviet and East European Support for Syria and Libya

### Syria

We estimate that about 2,500-3,000 Soviet and about 300 East European military advisers are stationed in Syria. All branches of the Syrian armed forces depend heavily on foreign military personnel to operate and maintain their weapons systems:

--Soviet pilot instructors are present in every air force squadron, and Soviet advisers are assigned to every surface-to-air missile brigade.

--East Europeans assist in such diverse areas as tank maintenance and in training military personnel to provide emergency medical care.

Soviet arms deliveries to Syria have declined in 1986, suggesting that existing contracts have mostly been fulfilled. Only electronic equipment and a few armored personnel carriers and late-model T-72 tanks have entered the country since 31 December 1985.

The Soviets have supplied Syria with a vast amount of modern equipment over the last few years, and we believe deliveries will pick up as the USSR moves ahead with the 1986-1990 five-year plan. In particular, we expect the Soviets will soon deliver additional SA-5 equipment and MIG-29 fighters, making Syria the first country outside the USSR to receive the aircraft.

We do not expect the Soviets to provide Syria with a new surface-to-surface missile in the next few years. Syria already has three SSM brigades--one equipped with the Scud B, another with the FROG, and a third with the SS-21 (see map 1). The 300-kilometer range of the Scud B enables it to reach targets in southern Israel, but neither the Scud B nor the FROG--with its 70-kilometer range--is very accurate. In contrast, the SS-21 is significantly more accurate and has a range of 120 kilometers which, from its normal deployment area, covers all of northwestern Israel.

Syria's SA-5 surface-to-air missile coverage will extend over nearly all of Israeli airspace once a newly-completed SA-5 site in southern Syria becomes operational (see map 2).

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We estimate that since 31 December 1979 Syrian purchases of military equipment from the Soviets have exceeded \$8.5 billion. Except for some barter payments, we believe Damascus has not repaid anything since 1982.

### Libya

We estimate that there are about 2,000 Soviet advisers and technicians in Libya providing instruction, planning, and maintenance. In addition, we believe that there are approximately 1,000 East Europeans working with the Libyan military.

Since the end of last year, the Soviets have provided Libya with a large amount of military equipment. Soviet shipments have included 24 SA-5 launchers and several hundred missiles; at least 12 fighter aircraft, including late-model MIG-23s; 15-20 transport and attack helicopters; and nearly 50 armored personnel carriers and about the same number of tanks.

We estimate that Libyan purchases of Soviet military equipment since 31 December 1979 have exceeded \$10 billion. We believe Libya is shipping 170,000 barrels of oil a day to Soviet clients which is credited against Tripoli's debt to Moscow. Nonetheless, we estimate that Libya is currently behind in payments by some \$1.1 billion.

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